I miss my stepmother. What a thing to say but it’s true. The prince is so boring: four hours to dress and then the cheering throngs. Again. The page who holds the door is cute enough to eat. Where is he once Mr. Charming kisses my forehead goodnight?

Every morning I gaze out a casement window at the hunters, dark men with blood on their boots who joke and mount, their black trousers straining, rough beards, callused hands, selfish, abrupt . . .

Oh, dear diary—I am lost in ever after: those insufferable birds, someone in every room with a lute, the queen calling me to look at another painting of her son, this time holding the transparent slipper I wish I’d never seen.
The Author Speaks!

I seem to be fatally attracted to heroes and heroines in fairy tales and comic books and movies. Over the years I’ve written about Superman and Dracula and King Kong and dozens of others. Students sometimes think that poets have mostly lofty thoughts. Not me. And if I have a lofty thought I try to get rid of it fast so something more interesting can get in.

I love the “What If?” principle in writing and use it all the time. What if Cinderella wasn’t happy in Ever After? What if King Kong escaped with the blonde? What if Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* was proud of her A? What if the Seven Dwarfs got tired of having Snow White around? Write your own “What If?” poem.